

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A nut transport element for use in a feed chain
of a high speed nutcracking apparatus, comprising
5 a generally block-like body which includes opposite
sides, opposite ends, and top and bottom faces, said top
face including a generally semi-cylindrical receptacle
extending laterally across the upper face and so as to
communicate with both of the opposite sides, with the
10 size of the receptacle being predetermined so as to
supportingly receive a single nut to be cracked which is
of a given size and is oriented with its end to end
direction extending axially along the receptacle, and
wherein said block-like body is formed of a high impact
15 plastic material.

2. The nut transport element of Claim 1 wherein the
high impact plastic material includes a colorant which by
design is representative of a particular size of the
20 receptacle.

3. The nut transport element of Claim 2 wherein the
high impact plastic material consists essentially of
urethane.
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4. The nut transport element of Claim 1 wherein said
block-like body further comprises a longitudinal slot
communicating with the full length of one of the sides as
well as with the receptacle, and with the slot extending
30 laterally a substantial portion of the distance across
the element.

5. A lightweight feed chain for successively delivering nuts in a predetermined orientation to a cracking unit of a nutcracking apparatus, comprising

an endless conveyor which comprises a plurality of
5 individual nut transport elements mounted in succession,
with each of said nut transport elements comprising a
generally block-like body which includes opposite sides,
opposite ends, and top and bottom faces, said top face
including a generally semi-cylindrical receptacle
10 extending laterally across the upper face and so as to
communicate with both of the opposite sides, with the
size of the receptacle being predetermined so as to
supportingly receive a single nut to be cracked which is
of a given size and is oriented with its end to end
15 direction extending axially along the receptacle, and
wherein said block-like body is formed of a high impact
plastic material.

6. The feed chain of Claim 5 wherein the high impact
20 plastic material includes a colorant which by design is
representative of a particular size of the receptacle.

7. A plurality of lightweight feed chains for
selective use in a nutcracking apparatus for successively
25 delivering the nuts to a cracking unit of a nutcracking
apparatus, with each feed chain comprising

an endless conveyor which comprises a plurality of
individual nut transport elements mounted in succession,
with each of said nut transport elements comprising a
30 generally block-like body which includes opposite sides,
opposite ends, and top and bottom faces, said top face
including a generally semi-cylindrical receptacle
extending laterally across the upper face and so as to
communicate with both of the opposite sides, with the

size of the receptacle being predetermined so as to supportingly receive a single nut to be cracked which is of a given size and is oriented with its end to end direction extending axially along the receptacle, and

5 wherein the receptacles of the nut transport elements of each feed chain are of uniform size which is different from the size of the receptacles of the other feed chains, and wherein the nut transport elements of each feed chain are formed of a high impact plastic
10 material which is color coded with a colorant which uniquely identifies the size of the receptacles of the associated feed chain.